

“Art of drumming within jazz piano trio”

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Foreword.

As I remember myself, jazz piano trio was always my favorite band format in jazz music. I like the simplicity of it and in the same time the magic in it - how great players could get it to sound like an orchestra. Especially in this band format we can see how great musicians are as a listeners and supportive players, they share much bigger role and responsibility to make the music interesting and happening, than in bigger settings. Individual levels are equally important because every one of the musicians can choose directions where the music will go. Music is really about collective improvisation and truly listening to each other. This “platform” is great to explore dynamics, interaction and to become as a one – a great rhythm section.

To play within piano trio is a necessary experience for all jazz musicians who play rhythm section instruments - piano, double bass or drums. This section is the fundament for all bigger settings like quartet, quintet, until big band. It is really important for young pianists, bassists and drummers to have strong fundamentals and understanding how to play within trio setting. I think it would be a nice subject to check out for all drummers and other instrumentalists and I hope that the results that I will gain in my research will be useful for my colleagues.

Research question.

How can I through historical and stylistic understanding of jazz drummers in significant piano trios during jazz history, improve my skill as an interactive trio member?

What are the differences and similarities in drummers playing within significant jazz piano trios during the history of jazz? What are the characteristics of these great jazz piano trios? How can understanding of these differences, similarities and characteristics help me to react appropriately in different musical situations and combinations?

Description of the research paper.

I started my research after a conversation with my main subject teacher Eric Ineke. Our idea was to make my master research into something practical, something I could use in my playing as soon as possible. Playing within jazz piano trio is also related to my final main subject exam – part of my exam will be playing with the piano trio. It was important for me, in order to make good, interesting research, to choose subject what is practically usable and actual for me at this exact moment.

Together with Eric Ineke we made a list of great jazz piano trios during 1950's and 1960's. I chose this period because within less than twenty years approach of trio playing changed radically. Music of the first trios were strongly influenced by big band, swing music and not so much later avant-garde and free jazz movement set the approach to music.

Trios we chose are one of the best and most influential bands in this setting. Of course instead of some of these trios there could be some other, but we tried to choose most objective ones. We chose - "Oscar Peterson Trio" with Ed Thipgen on drums, "Winton Kelly Trio" with Jimmy Cobb on drums, "Ahmad Jamal Trio" with Vernel Fournier on drums, "Bill Evans Trio" with Paul Motian on drums, "Chick Corea Trio" with Roy Haynes on drums and "Keith Jarrett Trio" with Paul Motian. All of these great jazz piano trios, who are named after one of the best piano players ever, have some of the best and well known drummers in the world. This also was strong aspect why I wanted to discover and research more about playing within piano trio, because it seems that all the best players spent some time to work in this setting. That was good reason for me to analyze their playing and try to improve myself as a drummer.

Process of analyzing.

After discussion with Eric Ineke, we chose one significant album what represents the best of each band and analyzed every track. Most of the trios played long period of time without changing band members. I believe that playing together with the same people regularly for long time period can really make big impact on level of interaction and quality of music. I listened carefully to trio how they sound together, how drummer interacts with piano and bass player and why he makes exactly those choices what he makes. I wrote down specific drumming aspects of playing and practiced them separately. Then I played along with the recording and try to imitate and reproduce the feel, stylistic choices and the comping in my playing. Next step what I did to make this research even more practical and useful for me – I formed piano trio with my friends and we practiced these concepts together. We were trying to get essence out of each trio and understand how they play. The goal of my research would be to become more aware of different ways, approaches of playing drums in different music situations using knowledge and tools what I learned from great drummers within this setting.

During my main subject lessons with Eric Ineke I brought few songs from album where are some specific aspects of drumming which represents this band, drummer or style. Together were trying to make clear what are the characteristics of each player within significant piano trio. Also I played along recordings and Eric gave me tips and remarks how to do it more authentic and better.



“Oscar Peterson Trio”

(Oscar Peterson – piano, Ray Brown – double bass, Ed Thipgen – drums)

Oscar Emmanuel Peterson (August 15, 1925 – December 23, 2007) was a Canadian jazz pianist and composer. He was called the "Maharaja of the keyboard" by Duke Ellington, but simply "O.P." by his friends. He released over 200 recordings, won eight Grammy Awards, and received numerous other awards and honors. He is considered to have been one of the greatest jazz pianists, having played thousands of live concerts to audiences worldwide in a career lasting more than 60 years.¹

“We get requests” 1964

Trio.

All songs on album are around 4 minutes, for radio, commercial purposes. Ideas are concrete and compact, not much space for developing material. First section of the theme “A” is often played in two feel by bass player and “B” goes to “walking” bass feel, while drums plays steady swing pattern true all theme. Often between piano and drums is happening kind of “big band trading approach” – Oscar is playing “brass kicks” and Ed is responding with fills. Drummer and bassist are following pianist in terms of dynamics – if piano player goes more active they go too and vice versa. Musicians are playing with dynamics. They are exploring going from really soft to loud.

This trio is really built for Oscar to shine. Drums and bass are there to set good feel for him and add some color to music. Oscar could do all aspects of trio himself – melody, harmony and rhythm. Side mans are not interacting too much with pianists.

After playing for long time together with the same band members we can hear that band is really playing tight together. They know each other and reacts to dynamics or change in the atmosphere immediately.

Oscar Peterson is known as one of the best virtuoso piano players of all time. In his trio it is obvious who is boss there. Oscar is leading the band all time. Music is swinging but there is not much space for unpredictable things to happen.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Peterson

This recording is really good to play along and practice time keeping and sense for swing. It is also good for learning the tunes. Really well arranged intros end endings.

Drums.

Solid “chick” hi-hat sound is “trade mark” of Ed Thipgen’s drumming. It gives strong time feeling and keeps music swinging from top till the end.

Comping is really soft, doesn’t much interact with pianist or bass player.

Ride pattern is steady, with forward motion, tempo stays solid - you can always rely on that.

Ed often changes from brushes to sticks and back. This process is done really smoothly and without interrupting the groove.

During ballads he plays really soft hi-hat on beats 2 and 4. Brushwork also is really minimalistic – just keeps time, doesn’t overplay, plays for the soloist, music.

Latin grooves (“Corcovado”, “The girl of Ipanema”) are still played in swing feel.

Uses hi-hat stronger on B part, in this way puts emphasis on new section. Steady time keeping – that’s priority.

Playing with brushes – when Ed wants to built tension in new section of song he just presses harder on brushes and increases swiping amplitude on drum skin - minimalistic changes that creates big effect on direction of music.

Often leaves for a while snares off while switching from brushes to sticks.

Theme - brushes, solos - sticks – classical approach.

In medium swing tunes Ed uses rim click on beats 2 and plays two eight notes on high tom on beats 4. Sometimes on medium tempos, when playing with brushes, just swipes quarter notes with few ghost notes that indicates ride pattern.

When moves from brushes to sticks often keeps brush in left hand for a while.

On tune “Have you meet miss Jones” plays, so called “Elvin ride pattern” with accent on 3rd triplet of beats 2 and 4.

Interesting is “latin/swing” groove on “Corcovado” and “ The girl of Ipanema” - rhythm is played in swing fell but there is constant, regular clave. Really soft bass drum work.

Doesn’t use almost at all tom toms while comping behind soloist.

Ed is really listening to soloist for information when to change approach of his playing – when built intensity, when release it. Dynamics plays huge role. Listening is everything.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Ed Thipgen playing with “O.P. Trio”

1. Practice to change from brushes to sticks and back after 16 bars, 8 bars, 4 bars, without losing good, steady swing feel;
2. Play only swing pattern on ride really soft and steady with forward motion in mind;
3. Make sure your hi-hat have this tight “chick” sound true all song;
4. Brushes - start minimalistic then add for each section stronger swiping from one side to another;
5. Brushes – swipe towards beats 2 and 4. Make crescendo to this beats;
6. Practice to play ballads without using hi-hat at all. Still keep good tempo and feel;

7. Practice “Corcovado” drum groove in swing feel with really soft bass drum work;
8. Play slow tempo swing, accent on 3rd triplet on beats 2 and 4 on ride pattern (so called Elvin Jones swing pattern);
9. Groove – rim click on beats 2 and two eighth notes on high tom on beats 4;
10. Play fills or comp only when you hear/feel it. Never overplay. Listen to all trio members and to overall sound of trio, try to blend in it.

Exercises I got from Ed Thipgen drumming helped me a lot to improve my sense of swing feel and importance ability to lay down good foundation for the band. He is great team player and puts music beyond everything else. It is hard for me to keep myself always in great control what I play and not get to excited and interrupt groove and swing of the music.

Latin/swing tunes like “Corcovado” and “The girl of Ipanema” showed me how to successfully connect swing with latin music with clave. Practicing to play one, specific groove for long period without changing it, helped me to improve my stability as a drummer.

Good exercise was to play only what you hear. Trying to avoid playing ideas what are played automatically, without even thinking about them. I found it quite hard to keep your mind focus all the time and to be completely aware if what you are suggesting is really what is need for music in exact moment.



“Wynton Kelly Trio”

(Wynton Kelly – piano, Paul Chambers – double bass, Jimmy Cobb – drums)

*Wynton Charles Kelly (December 2, 1931 – April 12, 1971) was a Jamaican American jazz pianist and composer. He is known for his lively, blues-based playing and as one of the finest accompanists in jazz. He began playing professionally at age 12, and was pianist on a No. 1 R&B hit at the age of 16. His recording debut as leader occurred three years later, around the time he started to become better known as accompanist to singer Dinah Washington, and as a member of trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie's band. This progress was interrupted by two years in the army, after which Kelly returned to Washington and Gillespie, and played with other leaders. Over the next few years, these included instrumentalists Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, John Coltrane, Roland Kirk, Wes Montgomery, and Sonny Rollins, and vocalists - Betty Carter, Billie Holiday, and Abbey Lincoln. Kelly attracted the most attention as part of trumpeter Miles Davis' band from 1959, including an appearance on the trumpeter's *Kind of Blue*, often mentioned as the best-selling jazz album ever. After leaving Davis in 1963, Kelly played with his own trio, which recorded for several labels and toured the United States and internationally. His career did not develop much further, and he had difficulty finding enough work late in his career. Kelly, who was prone to epilepsy, died in a hotel room in Canada following a seizure, aged 39.²*

“Kelly Blues” 1959

Trio.

Similar approach to music as “Oscar Peterson Trio” – drums and bass supports piano player, doesn’t interact too much just lays nice groove for him. For bassist there is already more freedom than before, but not so much as comes later with “Bill Evans

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynton_Kelly

Trio”. On this particular recording this rhythm section have tendency to slow down a bit, but mostly it’s hard to notice that and that doesn’t change groove or feel of music so much. On tune “Willow weep for me” trio applies interesting time approach – bass and piano plays in medium two feel swing but drums introduces double time feel in his time keeping and fills. Bass stays all song in two feel. This kind of playing with time led to slowing down quite a lot.

In other situations when bass introduces more open playing with two feel during the theme, drums plays 4/4 forward motion swing time. Doesn’t take opportunity, risk to make music more open, spacy. Trio keeps basic form of the song Intro (optional) – Theme – Piano solo – Bass solo – Trading with drums (optional) – Head with arranged ending.

Drums.

Jimmy Cobb often plays rim click on beats 4 a la Philly Joe Jones. In many ways his influence was Philly. Really steady time keeping. More busy comping on snare drum than Ed Thipgen. During song “Old clothes”, they do trading between piano and drums what is not so common in Peterson’s trio. On drum solo, Jimmy plays most of the ideas in double time using a lot of rudimental approach (another influence of Philly Joe Jones). Kelly also takes this idea about double time but they don’t go all together there. On theme of the song plays time on hi-hat. Makes variations of rhythm. When bass player choses to play more open, rhythmically more risky, Cobb just keeps steady groove in this way making balance in the band.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Jimmy Cobb playing with “Wynton Kelly Trio”.

1. Light ride pattern + solid comping on snare drum;
2. On bass solo RH brush keeps quarter note on ride and LH comps on snare drum;
3. Practice to switch from two feel to double time and back without losing sense of steady groove;
4. Practice to play drum solo using rudimental approach and double time feel.

Jimmy Cobb is great to make band sound good. He takes out his ego and supports music completely. This mindset I try to have when I play with other people. 1st exercise helped me to make my cymbal beat lighter and give music forward motion. In combination with solid comping on snare drum it gives the right swinging feel to the music.

Practicing rudiments separately is routine for every drummer. Jimmy Cobb is good example how to apply them in your drum solo in a musical way. I took specific rudiments like single stroke roll, double stroke roll, paradiddle and try to play all solo using only this one specific rudiment or combinations of them. In combination with good swing feel it creates already quite good sounding drum solo.



“Ahmad Jamal Trio”

(Ahmad Jamal – piano, Isreal Crosby – double bass, Vernel Fournier – drums)

*Ahmad Jamal (born Frederick Russell Jones, July 2, 1930) is an American jazz pianist, composer, group leader, and educator. For five decades, he has been one of the most successful small-group leaders in jazz.*³

“At the Pershing: But not for me” 1958

Trio.

Bass player plays more open than before – during the theme basic bass function merges with counter melodies against piano melody. More free approach than “Oscar Peterson Trio” or “Wynton Kelly Trio” but always keeps solid walking line as well. Ahmad leaves a lot of space for rest of band members, so listener can hear only groovy drum and bass interaction, opposite of trios before. This trio doesn’t rush to fill everything with notes. Space is characteristic of this trio. Also this trio has well arranged endings. This is common to most of the trios.

Ahmad doesn’t overplay – doesn’t play too much without a reason (Miles Davis approach). Ahmad introduces 3 over 4 patterns in this way provoking rest of the band members to follow to take more risks in music. He is not afraid to repeat one simple idea and slowly develop it. This approach is interesting to listener, because it’s easier to follow and you are curious what will happen next, where idea will go. Piano and drums plays “question, answer game” – one is giving musical question, other answers to it in creative, musical way.

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmad_Jamal

On “Moonlight in Vermont” nice time shifting to double time in $\frac{3}{4}$ then back to half time in 4/4. Often in first theme drums plays full swing pattern while bass is playing two feel then 2nd theme bass goes to walking bass. This is kind of traditional way of playing head of a standart jazz tune.

On track “What’s new” – very interesting and original for that time kind of rock music pattern appears. For 1958 - quite modern!

Ahmad is modern player in his concept – he leaves a lot of space for music to develop on its own. Nobody in band tries to fill all the space, they don’t play a lot, but everything is swinging and in its right place. The basic idea of trio is similar to Oscar Peterson and Wynton Kelly but Ahmad is more playful and is not afraid to sound silly and take risks.

Drums.

Vernel plays the same groove as Ed Thipgen - groove with rim click on beats 2 and to eight notes on high tom on beats 4. Most of the song Vernel keeps the groove the same, just builds intensity up together with all trio. Not so much interaction, because constant groove kind of “locks in”.

On “Surrey with the fringe on top” good up tempo brush work – steady groove while playing kicks with bass drum. With this constant repetitive groove Vernel kind of hypnotize listener and then, all of a sudden, plays something unexpected to keep you awake. In my opinion in many situations Vernel could go more open, more daring to follow music, but he keeps basic steady groove (traditional approach).

On “Poinciana” - new, original groove influenced by Cuban music. Idea is to keep one specific groove true all song and little by little develop and build it. Everybody in band have few patterns what they repeat and make variations of them, which keeps tune groovy and developing.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Vernel Fournier playing with “Ahmad Jamal Trio”

1. Keep fast, steady brush pattern and play kicks, syncopations with bass drum;
2. Play ride on beats 2 and 4 with RH while playing different claves with LH – on snare, toms. Improvise around this claves (“Poinciana”);
3. Try to keep one simple groove and play it for long time slowly adding some development, build it from beginning till the end;
4. Experiment with different brush patterns for slow, medium, up tempo swing tunes as well as for straight 8th music like bossa nova or samba.

I learned from Vernel Fournier to keep one, repetitive groove for long time without changing it radically with fills or breaks. I can build it up with adding variations and intensity to the groove I am playing, but never interrupt it with unnecessary ideas for music. His brushwork also is really good subject to check out more deep. I was playing around with variations of basic brush pattern in order to give different texture to next part of song.



“Bill Evans Trio”

(Bill Evans – piano, Scott LaFaro – double bass, Paul Motion – drums)

*William John Evans, known as Bill Evans (August 16, 1929 – September 15, 1980), was an American jazz pianist and composer who mostly worked in a trio setting. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time, and is considered by some to have been the most influential post-World War II jazz pianist. Evans's use of impressionist harmony, inventive interpretation of traditional jazz repertoire, block chords, and trademark rhythmically independent, "singing" melodic lines continue to influence jazz pianists today. Unlike many other jazz musicians of his time, Evans never embraced new movements like jazz fusion or free jazz.*⁴

“Portrait in Jazz” 1960

Trio.

In my opinion in this trio role of bass player changed dramatically. Scott La Faro set new concept of playing bass in jazz. Bass function now is more diverse – he plays counter lines, melodies under original melody, rhythmically very interesting. Often piano player goes to double time, but drums and bass stays in half time. Quite original - bass player plays long notes with bow! There is really good connection between Bill and Scott, they are exploring harmonic and rhythmical freedom while Paul is keeping good fundament for them. On “Autumn Leaves” bass plays syncopated bass line, quite rhythmically interesting bass work. Another small innovation - bass takes first solo without any accompaniment! Later piano and drums joins for bass solo with kind of free approach of comping – not playing strictly traditional. This Bill Evans trio started to make music more free and members of band are more equal and everybody can direct the way of music to go and develop, opposite O.P.T. approach. Often endings of piano solo is kind of free collective improvisation which is quite common in free jazz movement. Bass is playing more open during theme dividing attention from melody and what happens under it. During solos trio doesn't go directly to walking bass line, but plays around two fell, creates tension. Bass solo more technically advanced and risky than before. Bass uses pedal points to open up new

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Evans

sections. Bill starts piano solo without drums at all, drums joins in B part and then again completely disappear on next A part!

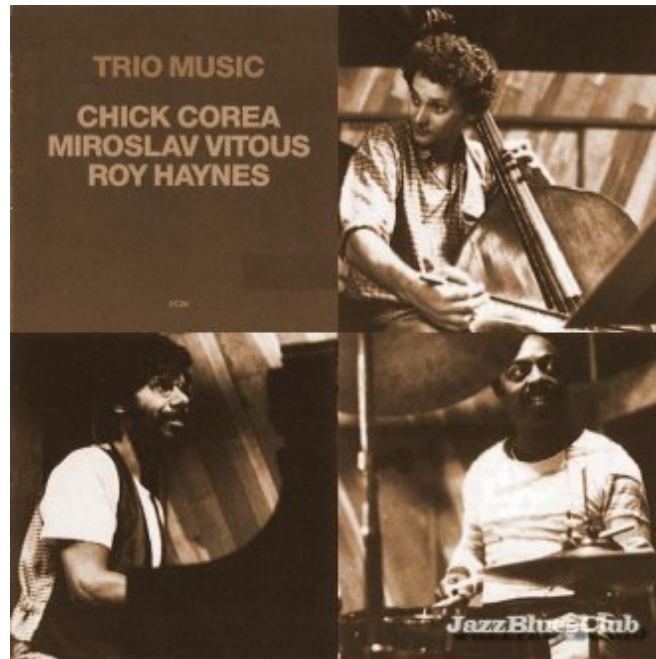
Drums.

Paul Motion interacts a lot more with soloist than before. He keeps hi-hat steady on 2 and 4 while reacting and coloring with brushes on snare. In this trio Motion takes care of time feel and forward motion to keep things together with those two open playing musicians. He could go open and follow them but choose to keep time to keep balance. On ballads uses cymbals for more colorful, open sounds. Minimalistic playing on this ballad, give a lot of space for other band members and for music itself to develop. For solos goes more to steady brush work. On “What is this thing called love” free comping on A part of theme but on B goes to steady time keeping.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Paul Motion playing with “Bill Evans Trio”

1. Practice to comp bass solo – don’t use hi-hat on beats 2 and 4, play some ideas, leave bars free, but always keep tempo and groove in mind;
2. On ballads keep steady time with brushes on snare then go for more open playing on cymbals then back to steady time on snare. Don’t loose groove and feel of song;
3. Practice to keep time on hi-hat with RH and play melodies of jazz standarts on snare drum with LH;
4. Play time with brushes and put hi-hat in random spots, don’t play on beats 2 and 4.

Practicing playing steady, groovy swing time without using hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 was quite challenge. I am so used to rely on help of hi-hat to keep good time that taking it out of my playing open me other doors to do the same job. In this way I need to even more rely to my inner time feel and work on that more to be able to provide good, steady time feel with or without any of specific drum set parts.



“Chick Corea Trio”

(Chick Corea – piano, Miroslav Vitous – double bass, Roy Haynes – drums)

Armando Anthony "Chick" Corea (born June 12, 1941) is an American jazz and fusion pianist, keyboardist and composer. Many of his compositions are considered jazz standards. As a member of Miles Davis' band in the 1960s, he participated in the birth of the electric jazz fusion movement. In the 1970s he formed "Return to Forever". Along with Herbie Hancock, McCoy Tyner, and Keith Jarrett, he has been described as one of the major jazz piano voices to emerge in the post – John Coltrane era. Corea continued to pursue other collaborations and to explore various musical styles throughout the 1980s and 1990s. He is also known for promoting and fundraising for a number of social issues, such as eradicating social illiteracy.⁵

“Now he sings now he sobs” 1968

Trio.

On this album mostly are original compositions by Chick Corea. Expressive and energetic melodies create great platform for musicians to explore rhythmical variations. There is great level of interaction between band members, especially between piano and drums. They share a lot of rhythmical information and support each other. Bass player keeps it really good together, kind of bass and drums switch roles if you compare to Bill Evans Trio. Chicks timing really fits together with Roy's. This trio was really essential to move jazz piano trio setting to next level.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chick_Corea

Drums.

Roy Haynes in this recording is using flat ride cymbal (he is one of the first drummers to do so). His approach to up tempo swing is quite unique – he doesn't always play repetitive cymbal pattern. His playing is more like dancing, improvising with this pattern. Also hi-hat is rarely played on beats 2 and 4. It is used more for colors and combined with snare and ride cymbal. He explores each instrument of drum set on its own – makes each drum or cymbal to become as complete instrument itself. Sometimes on bass solos leaves bass and piano alone and then when he comes back its bigger effect and contrast. Uses only snare drum – variations of rudiments to support theme.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Roy Haynes playing with “Chick Corea Trio”

1. Practice to play ride cymbal without constant, repetitive pattern. Improvise with 1 and 2 beat figures. Then play between ride and snare drum, only hands;
2. On up tempo swing feel practice to play paradiddle variations between ride cymbal and snare drum;
3. Play free form drum solo. Use one idea and develop it;
4. Explore hi-hat as complete instrument itself;
5. Play on snare drum rudiments inspired groove on head of the tune (“Now he sings, now he sobs”).

Roy Haynes inspired practicing was helpful for me in the way that I become more aware of importance of each of drum set instruments separately. If I approach every single instrument as one complete instrument instead of thinking of whole drum set as on, which of course it is, I can add more colors and ways of playing solo. Also approaching idea of developing one idea for whole solo brings to me other perspectives how to play my drum solo.

1st exercise helped me to open up my ride cymbal patter. Often drummers kind of stuck with one basic ride cymbal pattern, but with making variations of it without losing swing feel and groove I can give this pattern next step, development and it can bring music forward.



“Keith Jarrett Trio”

(Keith Jarrett – piano, Charlie Haden – double bass, Paul Motion – drums)

Keith Jarrett (born May 8, 1945) is an American pianist and composer who performs both jazz and classical music. Jarrett started his career with Art Blakey, moving on to play with Charles Lloyd and Miles Davis. Since the early 1970s he has enjoyed a great deal of success as a group leader and a solo performer in jazz, jazz fusion, and classical music. His improvisations draw from the traditions of jazz and other genres, especially Western classical music, gospel, blues, and ethnic folk music. In 2003, Jarrett received the Polar Music Prize, the first (and to this day only) recipient not to share the prize with a co-recipient,^[1] and in 2004 he received the Léonie Sonning Music Prize. In 2008, he was inducted into the Down Beat Hall of Fame in the magazine's 73rd Annual Readers' Poll. ⁶

“Life between the exit signs” 1968

Trio.

Music on this album has strong effect from two big and different jazz figures – Ornette Coleman and Bill Evans. We can hear influence from free jazz movement and romantic themes and pianistic approach from Bill Evans legacy. Together it creates nice mixture between past and future.

The trio is playing together with really loose swing feeling – there is ongoing pulse but the musicians are playing around it, sometimes creating feeling that there is no steady pulse. Even in songs where theme is Bill Evans influenced, with steady time and harmonic information, in solos they go into more abstract, free collective improvisation and create big contrast with theme. During piano solo bass and drums often doesn't go to walking feel, they stay in broken two feel in this way creation big tension. Listener who is used to earlier trio concepts can't wait when rhythm section will start to “walk”, and in this way if they choose to go in walking feel it's big effect. Keith Jarrett often uses different groupings over triplets (like 4, 5) in this way creating

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keith_Jarrett

illusion that he plays in other time signature than other band members. After quite long collective improvisation part, on someone cue they stop in the same time, small pause and they start again free improvisation – nice way to get audiences attention if they are too tired. Keith Jarrett is playing percussion instruments in this trio – he is open for any innovations.

Drums.

Paul Motion is different drummer on this album than before with Bill Evans. He is playing really open, strongly influenced by free jazz movement. Swing is played in broken time with no regular pattern on ride cymbal or hi-hat. Switches from playing time only on snare drum then back to ride cymbal. Uses a lot of space – sometimes suddenly stops playing at all, then comes back creating big contrast. During drum trades, solos overlaps in this way they create more continuous flow. Usually its really clear when is 4 or 8 bars for drummer then 4 or 8 bars for other soloists. One of the songs starts with free drum intro just on hi-hat and bass drum. Paul is experimenting, he takes risks and are not afraid to sound silly or childlike. This kind of mindset is necessary to create something new and push boundaries of music and avoid clichés.

Exercises/concepts inspired by Paul Motion playing with “Keith Jarrett Trio”

1. Play free – improvise without style or tempo limits. Try to find sounds and combinations of them you don’t use normally. Explore your instrument;
2. Play broken swing time with steady pulse but without repetitive ride pattern. When playing with band, just listen to soloist and follow him. Don’t worry about precision of time just about going into the same direction;
3. Play along with free jazz recordings and follow what is happening – dynamics, textures, tensions, releases;
4. If possible practice with trio to trade 4’s or 8’s with drums and play over beginning of piano players 4 bars and vice versa;
5. Play drum solo with mindset that you will play something you don’t play normally, avoid playing things you are used to play.

After experimenting with playing without any limitations, for example, tempo, my listening to sounds I make become more intense. My brain is not busy with technique aspect or need to keep good time it can be fully concentrate to quality of sound as textures I create. This way of practicing can open up one’s ears and make one listen more deep in details. I find exercise 5 really helpful to improve my creativity and explore instrument. I had a lot of fun to rethink what to play during my solo. In this way I don’t play so often things what are coming out automatically because I practiced them, but my solo becomes more meaningful just because I really play what I hear.

Experience with my own trio.

During this research I wanted to gain knowledge that I could use practically in my playing, that's way I formed my own jazz piano trio where we were practicing different concepts of playing together. We listened to recording of each trio and analyzed what does each of players and what are characteristics of these bands.

It was quite a challenge to really assimilate language, feel, atmosphere created by each of the trios because they were one of the pioneers of this type of music and they did it the best. We listened to their music together and discussed the details and aspects why they sound the way they do. A lot of time it was hard to describe it in words and sometimes we new more what they don't do than what they do. It was challenging to keep our playing in certain style and not to lose that mood. We are generation of musicians who have the opportunity to hear and see all different types of music and genres what is around us nowadays, and I believe that we should create our music with all these different influences. For example, when Oscar Peterson started his trio, there were not so many different jazz music styles, than we have nowadays and I guess for him was easier to concentrate to one kind of style he chose to play. During experience with my trio it was great to really focus my playing and choices in one particular way, style of playing and I feel that after this research I am more aware of differences between jazz styles and my role as a drummer. However, this period of time, of course, is not enough to really master this subject but I think I started on the right track.

Part of my presentation will be showing and explaining different ways of playing within jazz piano. For example – Oscar Peterson, Wynton Kelly and Ahmad Jamal trio's where similar in the way that drummer and bass player where mostly supporting pianist with strong swing groove and didn't interact so much with soloist. Starting from Bill Evans Trio, role of the musicians become more equal. Now bass player and drummer could suggest where music goes dynamically and atmosphere wise. Time keeping changed to more abstract playing around the beat, letting phrases go over bar lines and even lose pulse at all.

I will perform with my own trio and we will try to practically show our gained knowledge after this research.

Conclusions.

After listening to all these great albums and analyzing what the drummer chooses to play I understood that it's not just the drummer's personality that counts, but big impact to drummer's decisions are what the other two band members are doing and suggesting in music. One needs always listen to each other and go the same way musically. One's job within jazz trio setting is to make other musicians sound good and make their job easier and more comfortable. This setting is really fragile and it can work only if each member of trio is working towards the same goal. In different jazz styles the basic fundament of every musician is the same – to keep music going with nice feel and energy.

In more early trios drums and bass mostly served a time keeping role and where responsible together with piano player for building intensity and release during the song. For me first big turning point was the “Bill Evans Trio” – with a bass player like Scott La Faro. Since then, time keeping concept for bass players changed. Bass lines started to be more independent and playful. Often during the melody bass player could play kind of counter melody and be rhythmically really creative in this way creating tension in music. All band members started to become more and more equal in directing the development of the music. Piano trio concept what Keith Jarrett had with his band members was even more daring – now there is no strict separation who is soloist and is there someone who keeps time, form or not. Approaching music and its development more abstract and free was next step to bring more freedom to musicians and their choices.

Like Jeff Ballard (“Brad Mehldau Trio” current drummer) said in a workshop in The Royal Conservatory 2012 – “Jazz is collective improvisation from beginning till end. If you want to play solo, play alone!” I think this statement clearly says how important it is to listen to each other and respect each other. Even if it is your solo you should be totally aware of what your trio members are doing and suggesting to you.

Mostly in the process of my research I tried to study different concepts and exercises that I found on these recordings. Practicing exercises to get into style and vibe of each drummer challenged me to not overplay some of the things I learned from more free approach playing while I am in the “mood” of more swing type of playing. I need to be really clear with my choices when I am practicing this. Of course, when I am playing on the band stand, all this knowledge mixes up and everything is possible, but I am more aware what I want to come out of my playing. After listening a lot of times to each trio I started to understand the feel, atmosphere and overall sound of each band. When I practically apply this knowledge I feel more mature and versatile as a drummer, because I know how to create a different feel on my drumset and give the other band members specific feel of music.

After listening and analyzing playing of each trio, specifically drummer, I have gained more knowledge what “drummistic” choices are more suitable for different musical situations if I want to play in specific style. There are different ways of playing drummer needs to be aware which work if you want to support somebody who wants to play, for example, in style of “Oscar Peterson Trio” or “Keith Jarrett Trio”.

It was really practically helpful experience to gain knowledge about different ways of playing drums with jazz piano trios and hopefully this research can be inspiration for other musicians to go more deep into understanding of their own instrument and never ending possibilities to improve.

List of sources.

1. List of recordings:

1. Oscar Peterson Trio - "We get requests" 1964, Verve;
2. Wynton Kelly Trio - "Kelly Blue" 1959, Riverside;
3. Ahmad Jamal Trio - "At the Pershing: But not for me" 1958, Argo;
4. Bill Evans Trio - "Portrait in Jazz" 1960, Riverside;
5. Chick Corea Trio - "Now he sings, now he sobs" 1968, Solid State;
6. Keith Jarrett Trio - "Life between the exit signs" 1968, Vortex Records.

I made "Spotify" playlist on my "Spotify" account to reach these albums:
Pauls Pokratnieks Master Research Playlist
(<http://open.spotify.com/user/valerija.kuzmica/playlist/4FacG36c0GlmeSw6cFz79D>)

2. en.wikipedia.org

Biographies of members of each trio.

3. Articles on web related to this subject:

1. "Drum inspiration from jazz piano trios" by Scott K Fish.
(<https://scottkfish.wordpress.com/2014/07/20/drum-inspiration-from-jazz-piano-trios/>);

2. "Origins and Early Development of the Jazz Piano Trio" by Ned Judy.
(<http://nedjudy.com/jpt/>)